



# GOOD PRACTICE

## FLANDERS: PAYT

September 2014

## Content table

1.	General information on the good practice (GP) .....	3
1.1	General information .....	3
1.2	Context.....	4
1.3	Short description.....	4
1.4	Objective .....	5
1.5	Method used to identify the good practice .....	5
1.6	External factors .....	5
2.	Implementation .....	6
2.1	Preparation phase .....	6
2.2	Technical implementation.....	6
2.3	Communicative implementation.....	6
2.4	Organisations involved.....	6
2.5	Key success factors.....	6
2.6	Resources .....	7
3.	Results .....	8
3.1	Monitoring of the progress of the good practise .....	8
3.2	Other results.....	9
4.	Lessons learned.....	9
4.1	Negative effects .....	9
4.2	Challenges.....	10
5.	Pictures and other documentation.....	11
6.	Further information.....	12

## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE GOOD PRACTICE (GP)

### 1.1 General information

<b>Region</b>	Flanders
<b>Country</b>	Belgium
<b>Short name of the good practice</b>	Pay As You Throw (PAYT)
<b>Geographical level of implementation (country, region, municipality...)</b>	Region
<b>Target group</b>	Citizens
<b>Date of implementation/duration</b>	+/- 1995
<b>Waste stream (and subcategory)</b>	All Municipal Solid Waste
<b>Legal framework</b>	Flemish Regulation on Materials and Waste
<b>Main local instruments involved</b>	PAYT, Municipal solid waste fee for citizens (waste tariff)
<b>Scale (pilot/partially roll out /roll out)</b>	Roll out
<b>Initiator/coordinator</b>	Flemish government (Flanders) ) regional level
<b>Demography</b>	
Population	6.381.859 (on 01.01.2013)
Number of households	2.604.786 (on 01.01.2009)
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	13.521
Population density (number of inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> )	472,0 (on 01.01.2013)
<b>General waste data (Not necessarily related to the GP but to give some background information. Data about the GP should be included under 3.1)</b>	
Year of the following waste data	2012
Sum of all waste streams excl. residual & bulky waste (kg/inhabitant/year) (Use indicator 1 or 2 from the R4R Online Tool)	277,91
Residual waste (including sorting residues) (kg/inhabitant/year) (Use indicator 8 or 9 from the R4R Online Tool)	117,28

Total waste (add up the previous two)	395,19
Sum of all waste streams excl. residual & bulky waste to DREC (kg/inhabitant/year) (Use indicator 3 of the R4R Online Tool)	269,49

## 1.2 Context

In the beginning of the 90's there was a high resistance and opposition by part of the Flemish population against landfilling and incineration. As it was difficult to find new locations for waste treatment facilities, the need to reduce the quantity of landfilled and incinerated waste was very high. These resulted in highly performant incinerators. The environmental pollution from incineration had to be BAT (even without the neec part). The operation cost for waste management became nearly unpayable for the municipalities. For the Flemish municipalities, next to waste prevention, the strategy was the implementation of the "Pay As You Throw" (PAYT) principle, where differentiated taxes are used. Most expensive is the collection of residual waste, followed by the collection of the household biodegradable waste (to stimulate the home composting), with lowest taxes applied to Plastic bottles and flasks, Metal packaging and Drink cartons (PMD). The separate collection of paper & cardboard, container glass and textile is free. Tax on other waste streams varies depending the quantity.

Due to the constantly rising cost for the collection and treatment of the municipal solid waste (MSW), municipalities had to find new ways to finance those costs. Households often do not pay the full cost for handling the waste they generate! The Flemish government introduced for its whole region the principle of sorting at source of the MSW by the households. The question was: how could we stimulate the households to sort their waste at source? By creating appropriate financial incentives or different tariffs for the separate collection of those waste streams that can be recycled, re-used or composted, instead of ending up on the landfill site or in the incinerators. This was the practical way to implement the "Pay As You Throw" system. The less waste you produce (that has to be landfilled or incinerated) the less you have to pay for the waste you disposed of.

## 1.3 Short description

The "Pay As You Throw" principle (or the polluter-pays principle) is enacted to make the producer of the waste financially responsible for the collection and treatment of the waste he/she produced. Citizens are charged for the collection and treatment of the MSW, based on the amount they throw away. This principle is in Flanders combined with Differentiated Tariffs (DifTar) to make residual and bulky waste more expensive than selective collected waste streams.

## 1.4 Objective

Citizens have to pay when they dispose their waste streams collected by the municipality or when they bring it to one of the collection points (civic amenity sites, bring banks...). The aim is to stimulate citizens to sort their waste correctly into different recyclable waste streams by making waste sorting financially more attractive. On this way, more waste is re-used, recycled or composted and less waste is going to final treatment (incineration or landfill).

The aim has evolved during the last decades with the goal to recycle as much as possible waste materials after being used by the households and to produce as less as possible residual waste. There remains a ranking how these materials have to be delivered at the material harvesting system. The cost for waste streams that only can be incinerated with energy recovery is much higher compared to the waste streams collected separately with recycling as purpose. If there are better solutions (recycling – re-utilisation, making high value products from them) you have to pay less (or is free of charge).

## 1.5 Method used to identify the good practice

Expert judgement.

In the first Flemish Waste Decree of 1981 the ‘Polluter Pays Principle’ was already embedded. The embryo of “Pay As You Throw” was created! Municipalities in Flanders are statutory responsible for the collection and treatment of the municipal waste produced within their territory. When the collection and treatment costs rose, gradually the Flemish municipalities started up with the implementation of the “Pay As You Throw” principle.

## 1.6 External factors

Because Flanders is a very densely populated area, there is less (no) space for landfilling and incineration of waste. Therefore, the solution lays on the one hand in the maximum separate collection of recyclable materials and on the other hand in a strong reduction of the residual waste.

There is a clear link between the constantly rising cost for waste management (implementing BAT in incineration in particular), the uprise of people not wanting incinerators and landfill sites in their backyard (NIMBY-syndrome) and the success of “Pay As You Throw” implementation.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION

### 2.1 Preparation phase

There were pilot projects in a few municipalities in Flanders in the beginning of the 1990's. In the mid 1990's the implementation of the PAYT was accelerated seriously due to the general attitude of the citizens against incineration and landfilling of waste in their neighbourhood. At that time most of the Flemish municipalities switched from a flat household tax to Differentiated Tariffs (DifTar).

### 2.2 Technical implementation

First it was implemented by stickers or required waste bags sold at the city hall and local stores. You had to stick these stickers or you could only use the required waste bags for the collection of household waste organised by the municipalities or association of municipalities. Later on weight-based systems on residual waste and bio-waste with electronic registration are implemented.

### 2.3 Communicative implementation

There have been in the 1990's very huge information and awareness campaigns to stimulate all the citizens in Flanders into sorting waste materials. Waste recycling was promoted very intensively. Once the sorting was accepted by most of the citizens (which went astonishing smoothly in Flanders), the Flemish government introduced gradual the price per bag system for that part of waste that has to be incinerated or landfilled.

### 2.4 Organisations involved

In Belgium, the waste policy is fully regionalised. Therefore, the Flemish government is responsible for the implementation of the PAYT-system. The Public Waste Agency of Flanders (OVAM), the principle authority for waste management in Flanders, carries out the PAYT-system in collaboration with the municipalities or associations of municipalities.

### 2.5 Key success factors

- Clear legal framework: Mandatory separate collection schemes for the MSW. Making the regulation more firm, observing very well if the whole chain is moving into the right direction without severe obstructions.

- Financial support: The switch from a flat household waste tax to a weight-based pricing scheme has initially a cost e.g. purchase of micro-chipped bins, weighbridge at the civic amenity sites (CAS), etc .. So to start up the “PAYT”-principle, financial support for local governments by the regional government is advisable. In Flanders the municipalities are subsidized for implementing the “PAYT”-principle. The municipalities are subsidized for ‘DifTar-containers’ including a weighing system for door-to-door collection of residual or biodegradable household waste. Also ‘DifTar’-civic amenity sites are subsidized. Local authorities can build their CAS in a way they can charge the citizens depending on the quantity and type of waste they deposit. The Flemish government subsides starting from the beginning of the 1990's until now the infrastructure necessary for the separate collection of the MSW at source; e.g. civic amenity sites, composting facilities , .... The performance level of the installations that were subsidised became higher every time. The subsidizing programme has to as much as possible be target oriented.
- Technical aspects: Installing a convenient infrastructure for the separate waste collection.
- Accompanying policy measures: e.g. impose levies on landfilling and incineration, which makes recycling financially more interesting, introduce landfill and incineration bans for recyclable materials.
- Information and awareness raising: permanent awareness raising and information campaigns towards the citizens are crucial to make them familiar with the principles of the ‘PAYT’. Convincing the citizens and raising the knowledge of the PAYT system play an important role in the acceptance of the implementation of the PAYT scheme. This worked very well in Flanders.
- Continuous and active dialogue with the municipalities, association of municipalities and the keyrole players in the whole chain of waste management (citizens, private waste service providers (collectors), waste treatment companies, etc ...).

## 2.6 Resources

Initial investment: communication support, financial support, staff of OVAM and the municipalities/association of municipalities.

Operational cost: There is a revenue generated by what the citizens have to pay for some of the “Pay As You Throw” waste fractions. These revenues are not sufficient to cover all the waste management costs. In Flanders those costs still demand input of general taxes, mostly by the means of community taxes.

There has been a lot of subsidising over the years. At least 50 million euros.

It's difficult to put a financial value on the savings. The PAYT system created in Flanders over the time a significant increase in recyclable materials and a strong reduction in residual waste. Less waste and more recycling mean that fewer natural resources need to be extracted.

Others environmental savings are: e.g. reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution (Nox, Sox in particular) and soil pollution (heavy metals).

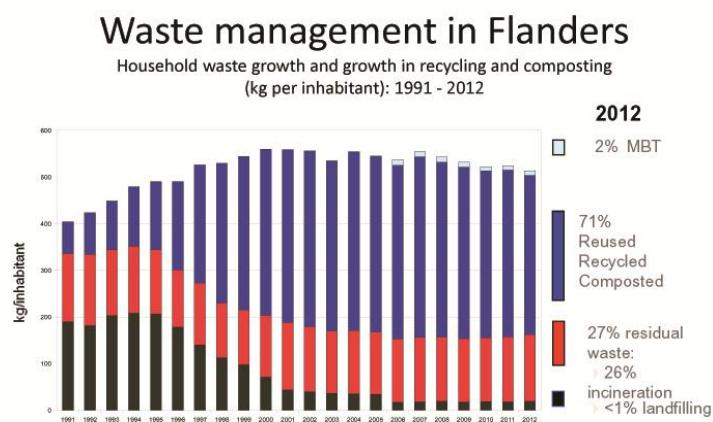
## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Monitoring of the progress of the good practise

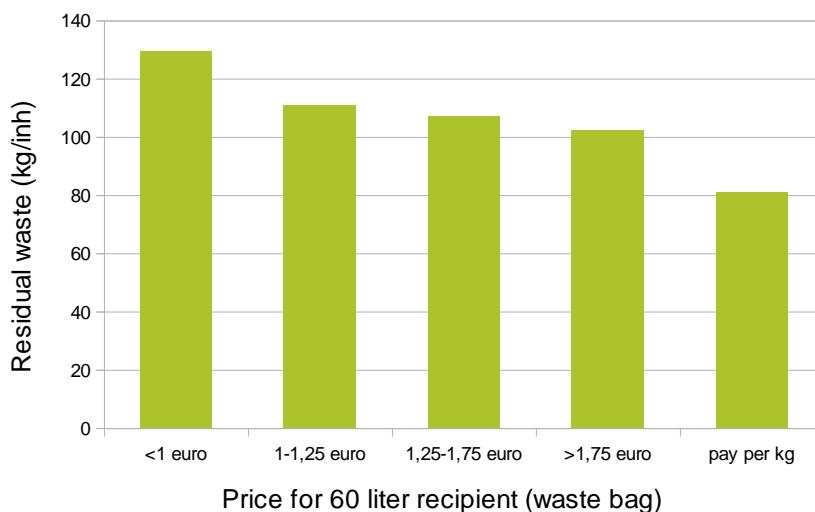
There is a real impact of the DifTar system on the separate collection of recyclable materials and reduction of the residual waste. The PAYT system created in Flanders over the time a significant increase in recyclable materials and strong reduction in residual waste.

Monitoring of the total generation of municipal solid waste, the separate collected waste streams and residual waste for final treatment shows over the time:

- Increasing of the separate collection of MSW at source (2012: 71%)
- Strong reduction of residual waste (average 149kg/inhab/year)
- Incineration and landfilling of MSW are pushed away over the last 15 years by the separate collection of MSW at source



Household waste production and waste collected separately expressed in kg per inhabitant in order to be reused recycled and composted period 1991 – 2012), (Source OVAM).



Direct impact of the price per kg of the waste produced on the waste produced per inhabitant per year expressed in kg, (Source OVAM).

### 3.2 Other results

Citizens have the possibility to sort their waste to a maximum. They pay at least a correct price for the collection and treatment of their waste. Citizens become more and more aware of the real price for waste collection and treatment. This stimulates at the same time waste prevention.

One of the most important results of the PAYT system is fairness; When the cost for waste management is hidden in a more general tax, as a flat rate, residents who sort well and prevent waste pay for the waste produced by their neighbours. With the PAYT system you pay only for that waste you throw away!

## 4. LESSONS LEARNED

### 4.1 Negative effects

Citizens have to pay for the waste collection and treatment. The PAYT can initiate illegal behaviour. Some citizens try to find illegal ways to pay less. The following illegal activities are possible:

- Illegal dumping of waste;

- Illegal burning of waste in the backyard;
- Waste tourism: the shifting of waste to municipalities that charge less for waste collection.
- Deliberately deposit residual waste (more expensive) in a recipient for a selective waste stream (less expensive).

These illegal activities, which is in fact tax evasion, are mainly addressed by the following measures:

- Information and awareness raising campaigns;
- Good and convenient waste separate collection system;
- Fines for illegal dumping and incineration;
- Refusal to collect or accept incorrect sorted selective waste streams. For packaging waste (PMD: Plastic bottles and flasks, Metal packaging and Drinking cartons) this is made possible by using transparent waste bags. At the CAS, the guards have to check all the waste before people can deposit it in the right container.

## 4.2 Challenges

You can't stop communicating and promoting the PAYT principle. You even can't stop ameliorating the system. So we have started a few years ago a project to harmonise the tariffs for household waste used in Flanders, since each municipality can decide independently on the waste tariffs.

The harmonisation of the tariff for the household waste collection and treatment between the Flemish municipalities or associations of municipalities avoid waste tourism. All the citizens in Flanders pay approximately the same price for the collection and treatment of their household waste.

The principle of PAYT needs to be introduced slowly and well-thought-out!

## 5. PICTURES AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION



## 6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Organisation	OVAM
Address	Stationsstraat 110, 2800 Mechelen, Belgium
Contact person	Maarten De Groof
Phone	+32 15 284 553
E-mail address	<a href="mailto:mdgroof@ovam.be">mdgroof@ovam.be</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.ovam.be">http://www.ovam.be</a>
Others	

# REGIONSFORRECYCLING